

R. D. Laing "The Divided Self" [en]

p.9 The present book is a study of schizoid and schizophrenic persons; its basic purpose is to make madness, and the process of going mad, comprehensible.

p.11 I wrote this book when I was twenty-eight. (ir eina peklon kaip neparašyčiau aš tokios knygos tokiam amžiuj....)

p.31 To see "signs" of "disease" is not to see neutrally.

p.34 I think it is clear that by "understanding" I do not mean a purely intellectual process. For understanding one might say love. But no word has been more prostituted.

No one *has* schizophrenia, like having a cold. The patient has not "got" schizophrenia. He is schizophrenic.

p.35 When two sane persons meet, there appears to be a reciprocal recognition of each other's identity. In this mutual recognition there are the following basic elements:

- a) I recognize the other to be the person he takes himself to be.
- b) He recognizes me to be the person I take myself to be.

p.36 I have no difficulty in regarding another person as psychotic, if for instance:
he says he is Napoleon, whereas I say he is not;
or if he says I am Napoleon, whereas I say I am not.

I suggest, therefore, that *sanity or psychosis is tested by the degree of conjunction or disjunction between two persons where the one is sane by common consent.*

p.42 If a position of primary ontological security has been reached, the ordinary circumstances of life do not afford a perpetual threat to one's own existence. If such a basis for living has not been reached, the ordinary circumstances of ordinary life constitute a continual and deadly threat.

If the individual cannot take the realness, aliveness, autonomy, and identity of himself and others for granted, then he has to become absorbed in contriving ways of trying to be real, of keeping himself or others alive, of preserving his identity, in efforts, as he will often put it, to prevent himself losing his self.

p.44 A firm sense of one's own autonomous identity is required in order that one may be related as one human being to another. Otherwise, any and every relationship threatens the individual with loss of identity.

The main manoeuvre used to preserve identity under pressure from the dread of engulfment is isolation.

Such merging of being can occur in an "authentic" way only when the individuals are sure of themselves. **If a man hates himself, he may wish to lose himself in other: then being engulfed (prarytas) by the other is an escape from himself.**

p.46 Depersonalization is a technique that is universally used as a means of dealing with the other when he becomes too tiresome or disturbing. One no longer allows oneself to be responsive to his feelings and may be prepared to regard him and treat him as though he had no feelings. The people in focus here both tend to feel themselves as more or less depersonalized and tend to depersonalize others; they are constantly afraid of being depersonalized by others.

p.51 Thoroughly to understand oneself (engulf oneself) is a defence against the risk involved in being sucked into the whirlpool of another person's way of comprehending oneself. **To consume oneself by one's own love prevents the possibility of being consumed by other.**

p.52 The more one attempts to preserve one's autonomy and identity by nullifying the specific human individuality of the other, the more it is felt to be necessary to continue to do so, **because with each denial of the other person's ontological status, one's own ontological security is decreased**, the threat to the self from the other is potentiated and hence has to be even more desperately negated.

If the individual does not feel himself to be autonomous this means that he can experience neither his separatedness from, nor his relatedness to, the other in the usual way.

p.53 Therefore, the polarity is between complete isolation or complete merging of identity rather than between separateness and relatedness.

p.58 The individual may be afraid to like anyone, for he finds that he is under a compulsion to become like anyone he likes. As I shall seek to show later, this is one motive for schizophrenic withdrawal.

p.60 The frustration she experienced with me, which called out intense hatred of me, was not fully to be explained by the frustration of libidinal or aggressive drives in the transference, but rather it was what one could term the existential frustration that arose out of the fact that I, by withholding from her the "comfort" she sought (seek) to derive from me, in that *I did not tell her what she was to be*, was imposing upon her the necessity to make her own decision about the person she was to become. Her feeling that she had been denied her birthright because her parents had not discharged their responsibility towards her by giving her a definition of herself that could act as her starting-point in life was intensified by my refusal to offer this "comfort". But only by withholding it was it possible to provide a setting in which she could take this responsibility into herself.

p.66 Most people feel they began when their bodies began and that they will end when their bodies die. We could say that such a person experiences himself as *embodied*.

p.69 *The body is felt more as one object among other objects in the world than as the core of the individual's own being.*

p.73 The "self" in such a schizoid organization is usually more or less unembodied. It is experienced as a mental entity. It enters the condition called by Kierkegaard "shut-upness".

p.75 Moreover, this shut-up self, being isolated, is unable to be enriched by outer experience, and so the whole inner world comes to be more and more impoverished, until the individual may come to feel he is merely a vacuum.

p.76 No one feels more "vulnerable", more liable to be exposed by the look of another person than the schizoid individual. If he is not acutely aware of being seen by others ('self-conscious'), he has temporarily avoided his anxiety becoming manifest by one or other of the two methods. Either he turns the other person into a thing, and depersonalizes or objectifies his own feelings towards this thing, or he affects indifference. The depersonalization of the person and/or the attitude of indifference are closely related but not quite identical. The depersonalized person can be used, manipulated, acted upon.

Of course, to feel that another person is treating or regarding one not as a person but as a thing need not itself be frightening if one is sufficiently sure of one's own existence. Thus, being a thing in someone else's eyes does not represent to the "normal" person a catastrophic threat, but to the schizoid individual every pair of eyes is in a Medusa's head which he feels has power actually to kill or dreaden something precariously vital in him. He tries therefore to forestall his own petrification by turning others into stones. By doing this he feels he can achieve some measure of safety.

p.77 The schizoid individual fears a real live dialectical relationship with real live people. He can relate himself only to depersonalized persons, to phantoms of his own phantasies (imagos), perhaps to things, perhaps to animals.

If the whole of the individual's being cannot be defended, the individual retracts his lines of defence until he withdraws within a central citadel. He is prepared to write off everything he is, except his "self". But the tragic paradox is that the more the self is defended in this way, the more it is destroyed. The apparent eventual destruction and dissolution of these if in schizophrenic conditions is accomplished not by external attacks from the enemy (actual or supposed), from without, but by devastation caused by the inner defensive manoeuvres themselves.

p.78 Franz Kafka "You can hold yourself back from the sufferings of the world, this is something you are free to do and is in accord with your nature, but perhaps precisely this holding back is the only suffering that you might be able to avoid".

It is well known that temporary states of dissociation of the self from the body occur in normal people. In general, one can say that it is a response that appears to be available to most people who find themselves enclosed within a threatening experience from which there is no physical escape.

p.80 This detachment of the self means that the self is never revealed directly in the individual's expressions and actions, nor does it experience anything spontaneously or immediately.

If the individual delegates all transactions between himself and the other to a system within his being which is not "him", then the world is experienced as unreal, and all that belongs to this system is felt to be false, futile, and meaningless.

p.81 paveiksluoks kuo skiriamas normalus nuo šizofreniko. Nėra apykaitos pas šizofreniką. Su pasauliu bendrauja per susikurtą false-self sistemą ir neturi realios apykaitos, dėl to vysta nuolat.

p.82 Instead of (self/body) – other
the situation is self – (body/other)

p.83 He is afraid of letting anything of himself "go", of coming out of himself, of losing himself in any experience, etc., because he will be depleted, exhausted, emptied, robbed, sucked dry.

He has to be in control of who or what comes into him, and of who or what leaves him.

p.85 The split between phantasy and reality is central to Minkowski's concept of autism.

But the person who does not act in reality and only acts in phantasy *becomes himself unreal*. The actual "world" for that person becomes shrunken and impoverished. The "reality" of the physical world and other persons ceases to be used as a pabulum for the creative exercise of imagination, and hence comes to have less and less significance in itself. Phantasy, without being either in some measure embodied in reality, or itself enriched by injections of "reality", becomes more and more empty and volatilized. The "self" whose relatedness to reality is already tenuous becomes less and less a reality-self, and more and more phantasticized as it becomes more and more engaged in phantastic relationships with its own phantoms (imagos).

p. 89 Fantazijų pasauly esu visagalis (omnipotence), realybėje – niekas (impotente).

Many schizoid writers and artists who are relatively isolated from the others succeed in establishing a creative relationship with things in the world, which are made to embody figures of their phantasy.

p.90 Participation of the self in life is possible, but only in the face of intense anxiety. Franz Kafka knew this very well, when he said that it was only through his anxiety that he could participate in life, and, for this reason, he would not be without it. For the schizoid individual direct participation "in" life is felt as being at the constant risk of being destroyed by life, for the self's isolation is, as we said, its effort to preserve itself in the absence of an assured sense of autonomy and integrity.

p.92 If you steal what you want from the other, you are in control; you are not at the mercy of what is given.
The desire to steal breeds phobias of being robbed.

p.93 If there is anything the schizoid individual is likely to believe in, it is his own destructiveness.

p.94 Every man is involved personally in whether or to what extent he is being "true to his true nature".

p.96 Isterikui false-self (vaidyba, isterija) padeda patenkinti real-self poreikius, šizofrenikui ne. Šizofrenikas kaip tik susikuria false-self tam, kad jo real-self taptų nepasiekiamas.

p.98 The essential feature of the compliant component in the false self is expressed in James's statement that he was "a response to what other people say I am".

p.99 Indeed, what is called psychosis is sometimes simply the sudden removal of the veil of the false self, which had been serving to maintain an outer behavioural normality that may, long ago, have failed to be any reflection of the state of affairs in the secret self.

p.105 The whole behaviour of some schizophrenics is hardly anything else than a patchwork of other people's peculiarities made more peculiar by the incongruity of the setting in which they are reproduced.

p.106 Self-consciousness, as the term is ordinarily used, implies two things: an awareness of oneself by oneself, and *an awareness of oneself as an object of someone else's observation*.

p.107 It is indeed an important achievement for the child to gain the assurance that the adults have no means of knowing what he does, if they do not see him; that they cannot do more than guess at what he thinks to himself if he does not tell them; that actions that no one has seen and thoughts that he has "kept to himself" are in no way accessible to others unless he himself "gives the show away". The child who *cannot* keep a secret or who *cannot* tell a lie because of the persistence of such primitive magical fears has not established his full measure of autonomy and identity.

p.110 Indeed, considered biologically, the very fact of being visible exposes an animal to the risk of attack from its enemies, and no animal is without enemies. Being visible is therefore a basic biological risk.

p.111 Being like everyone else, being someone other than oneself, playing a part, being incognito, anonymous, being nobody (psychotically, pretending to have no body), are defences that are carried through with great thoroughness in certain schizoid and schizophrenic conditions.

As Tillich writes: "Neurosis is the way of avoiding non-being by avoiding being".

p.113 He may need to be seen and recognized, in order to maintain his sense of realness and identity. Yet, at the same time, the other represents a threat to his identity and reality.

p.119 The schizoid individual is assuring himself that he exists by always being aware of himself. Yet he is persecuted by his own insight and lucidity.

p.123 He felt that he had to spend all his time and energy in being a credit to his father, his mother, his uncle, or his teacher. However, he was convinced in himself that he was nobody and worthless, that all his effort to be somebody was a deception and pretence.

p.124 He used to masturbate in the office lavatory while evoking these phantasies and once, as had previously happened with his mother, just after he had been doing this, he emerged and encountered the very woman whom he had been raping in his mind. She was looking directly at him so that she seemed to look straight through him into his secret self and to see there what he had been doing to her. He was filled with panic. He now could no longer believe with any assurance that he could conceal his actions and his thoughts from other people.

p.126 With almost everyone he began to operate with a false-self system, based on compliance with their wishes and ambitions for him.

p.131 The body clearly occupies an ambiguous transitional position between "me" and the world. It is, on the one hand, the core and centre of my world, and on the other, it is an object in the world of the others.

p.132 Onan's (onanizmas) sin in spilling his seed on the ground was that thereby he wasted his productivity and creativity.

Guilt is the call of Being for itself in silence, says Heidegger.

p.133 I've been sort of dead in a way. I cut myself off from other people and became shut up in myself. And I can see that you become dead in a way when you do this. You have to live in the world *with* other people. If you don't something dies inside. It sounds silly. I don't really understand it, but something like that seems to happen. It's funny.

p.138 Šizofrenikai ginasi nuo pasaulio, bet įsikalina savo pačių kalėjime.

The individual in this position may appear relatively normal, but he is maintaining his outward semblance of normality by progressively more and more abnormal and desperate means.

Hence what was designed in the first instance as a guard or barrier to prevent disruptive impingement on the self, can become the walls of a prison from which the self cannot escape.

Identity is reached and sustained two-dimensionally, it requires recognition of oneself by others as well as the simple recognition on accords to oneself.

p.139 the sense of identity requires the existence of another by whom one is known

Without the “self” ever being qualified by the other, committed to the “objective” element, and without being lived in a dialectical relationship with others, the “self” is not able to preserve what precarious identity or aliveness it may already possess.

p.148 Psichozė prasideda tada, kai šizofrenikas nusprendžia atverti pasauliui savo real-self. Geras pavyzdys buvo, kaip vienas normaliai besielgęs šizofrenikas vienos išvykos su šeima metu išsirengė nuogas ir įžengė iki pusės į upę. Ten jis liejo ant savęs vandenį ir sakė, kad baptizuoja, kad atpirktų savo nuodėmes dėl to, kad nemylėjo žmonos, nuolat vaidino ir t.t.

I am quite sure that a good number of “cures” of psychotics consist in the fact that the patient has decided, for one reason or other, once more to play at being sane.

p.150 It can be stated in its most general forma as: *the denial of being, as a means of preserving being*. The schizophrenic feels he has killed his “self”, and this appears to be in order to avoid being killed. He is dead, in order to remain alive.

p.157 The individual feels guilty at daring to be, and doubly guilty at not being, at being too terrified to be, and attempting to murder himself if not biologically, then existentially.

p.164 But it is necessary to proceed with great caution and circumspection. “Don’t try”, as Binswanger puts it, “to get too near, too soon”.

Joan says, “We schizophrenics say and do a lot of stuff that is unimportant, and then we mix important things in with all this to see if the doctor cares enough to see them and feel them.”

A good deal of schizophrenia is simply nonsense, red-herring speech, prolonged filibustering to throw dangerous people off the scent, to create boredom and futility (tuštuma) in others.

p.165 This provides striking confirmation of Jung’s statement that the schizophrenic ceases to be schizophrenic when he meets someone by whom he feels understood.

p.166 Hate has to come first. The patient hates the doctor for opening the wound again and hates himself for allowing himself to be touched again.

p.168 I felt as though I were in a bottle. I could feel that everything was outside and couldn’t touch me.

p.172 Everyone should be able to look back in their memory and be sure he had a mother who loved him, all of him; even his piss and shit. He should be sure his mother loved him just for being himself; not for what he could do. Otherwise he feels he has no right to exist. He feels he should never have been born.

You can only be broken if you’re already in pieces. As long as my baby-self has never been loved then I was in pieces. By loving me as a baby, you made me whole.

p.174 To schizophrenic, liking someone equals *being like* that person

p.176 We have referred to the desire to be dead, the desire for non-being, as perhaps the most dangerous desire that can be pursued.

(I guess you had to die emotionally or your feelings would have killed you).

p.183 really alive baby is demanding, is a trouble, and by no means always does what she is told.

p.186 If an individual needs another in order to be himself, it presupposes a failure fully to achieve autonomy, i.e. he engages in life from a basically insecure ontological position.